

Lt. Governor Brown Announces New Funding, Partnerships Support

By PRESS OFFICER

Office of the Lt. Governor

Federal, State and local officials sign MOU to develop Transportation Demand Management Plan; State to provide \$200,000 to launch Baltimore Region's First Guaranteed Ride Home Program; Private developer agreement funds the first MD 175 widening project

HANOVER, Md. (June 2, 2010) – Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown, chairman of the Governor's Subcabinet on Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), announced new funding, new partnerships and new initiatives to support BRAC jobs coming to Fort George G. Meade in Anne Arundel County, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with all public, private and governmental parties to develop a Transportation Demand Management Plan for Fort Meade.

"Because of the strong partnerships we have forged with the private sector, local government and the Department of Defense, Maryland is BRAC ready," Lt. Governor Brown said. "Today's announcement is another step forward and another reminder that our progress is only as strong as our partnerships. By providing Marylanders with viable alternatives to driving while upgrading the road network, we are making great strides to achieving a balanced approach to prepare for BRAC growth in Anne Arundel County and across the State."

Following a meeting with senior Department of Defense officials and Fort Meade regional stakeholders to discuss transportation issues around the installation, the Lt. Governor touted the State's leadership which brought all public, private and governmental BRAC partners to the table to finalize a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a Transportation Demand Management Plan for Fort Meade and announced that the State will invest \$200,000 to launch the Baltimore region's first "Guaranteed Ride Home Program" (GRH).

"We are on the brink of one of the most exciting opportunities this region has seen, and we all

have a stake in its success. This partnership allows us to pool our resources and develop a solution to what is undeniably one of BRAC's biggest challenges – the creation of a sustainable transportation plan,” said Howard County Executive Ken Ulman.

“This is a major step forward after two years of working closely with the State and the Fort Meade Regional Growth Management Committee to make Rt. 175 a priority, and I am especially pleased that the addition of three lanes to this crucial artery will be funded by developers,” Anne Arundel County Executive John R. Leopold said. “Starting this summer, we will begin making substantial progress toward relieving traffic around Fort Meade. This is not just about roads. We look forward to working with our partners to support Traffic Demand Management Initiatives that incorporate MARC rail, van pools, car pools and subscription bus service to increase mobility in West County.”

Federal, State and local officials signed the MOU to develop a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management Plan to ensure adequate transportation infrastructure around the installation. The Plan intends to reduce congestion by using a number of initiatives that encourage new and incumbent Fort Meade employees to consider alternative transportation options, including ridesharing, transit and telecommuting.

“This MOU represents the regions commitment to work together, on all levels, to tackle the multiple transportation needs that are involved with BRAC and other mission growth,” said Fort Meade Installation Commander Col. Daniel L. Thomas. “It is this type of commitment between the state, Fort Meade, our partner units and the business community that allows Fort Meade to support its war fighters, their families and civilian workforce so we can remain the nation's preeminent center for information and intelligence.”

“We want to thank Lt. Governor Brown and Secretary Swaim-Staley for hosting this meeting and inviting DISA. We are very interested in the transportation initiatives which are a critical concern for our workforce as we relocate to Ft. Meade beginning in January,” said LTG Carroll F. Pollett, Director of Defense Information Systems Agency. “We are committed to staying actively engaged with all of our Ft. Meade and Maryland partners to develop both short- and long-term transportation solutions.”

Among the principle items outlined in the new agreement is a State commitment of \$200,000 in annual funding to launch and maintain a GRH program in the Baltimore region. The GRH

program eliminates a major barrier to using transit, ridesharing and non-vehicular modes of transportation by providing a free ride home in the event of an unexpected personal emergency or unscheduled overtime. The ride home is generally a taxi ride home for shorter distances or a rental car for longer commutes.

The Baltimore GRH program is based on the successful program in the Washington region. Eligible commuters must work in the Baltimore Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and can live anywhere inside the MSA and as far as the Upper Eastern Shore and southern Pennsylvania. Commuters are eligible to register for the program if they utilize an alternative transportation mode at least twice per week and will be eligible for a free ride home up to four times a year. The program will be operated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, which has operated the Washington GRH program since 1997. More than 13,250 commuters, including 5,827 Marylanders, are currently registered in the Washington program.

Brown also announced that the State Highway Administration signed an agreement this week that will advance the widening of MD175 between the Baltimore/Washington Parkway (MD295) and Rockenbach Road. The MD175/Rockenbach Road intersection, one of the main entrances to Fort Meade, has been highlighted in the State's Intersection Improvement Program for upgrades. BRS/EGGERL, LLC, the property owner at the intersection, has agreed to widen this portion of MD175 from two to five lanes as part of the planned Parkside Development, a mixed-use project on the south side of MD175. Construction on this project could start within months and open to traffic before the Fall 2011 deadline for the completion of BRAC movements. The ongoing MD175 Corridor Study recommends widening the entire five-mile stretch along MD175 from the Baltimore/ Washington Parkway (MD295) to MD170 with improvements at each of the key intersections. This project would be the first construction project along the stretch.

"Thanks to the cooperative effort of the property owner, developer and Anne Arundel County, Fort Meade's most critical BRAC access project will get underway this summer," said Transportation Secretary Beverley K. Swaim-Staley. "This private sector funding agreement is a great example of how we can improve transportation and support our economy by working together."

BRAC will create as many as 60,000 new jobs across the state. Since taking office, the

O'Malley-Brown administration has strengthened existing cooperative efforts and established new partnerships with local government, community leaders, military officials and the private sector to identify key transportation priorities as the region prepares for the arrival of BRAC jobs.